United Nations S/PV.8358

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8358th meeting
Thursday, 20 September 2018, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Haley	(United States of America)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Ma Zhaoxu
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Mbengono
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Tenya
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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18-29340 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now welcome and give the floor to Mr. Mladenov.

Mr. Mladenov: On behalf of the Secretary-General, I will devote this briefing to presenting the seventh report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), covering the period from 13 June to 12 September 2018. I will focus on developments on the ground in accordance with the provisions of the resolution, including on regional and international efforts to advance peace.

Let me reiterate from the very beginning that these developments cannot be divorced from the broader context: Israel's continued military occupation of Palestinian territory; uncertainties about the future of the peace process and the two-State solution; Hamas' continuing hold on Gaza and its militant activity, including rocket attacks and tunnel construction; unilateral actions that undermine peace efforts; reduced donor support for the Palestinian Authority; and turmoil in the wider region.

I would like to highlight from the outset the very serious financial situation that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) continues to face. We welcome the contributions that several Member States recently announced and urge that additional new funding be provided for its critical work. On 27 September, a ministerial meeting in support of UNRWA will be held on the margins of the General Assembly. I urge all participants to engage constructively to ensure the continuity of the Agency's vital services.

No steps have been taken during the reporting period to "cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem", as required by the resolution. I reiterate that all settlement activities are a violation of international law and a major obstacle to peace.

Approximately 2,800 housing units in settlements in Area C of the occupied West Bank were advanced, approved or tendered by Israel. Approximately one third of those units are in outlying settlements, deep in the West Bank. Plans for about 1,100 units were advanced in the approval process, plans for an additional 600 units reached the final approval stage and tenders were announced for about 1,100 units. A tender was also announced for 603 housing units in the Ramat Shlomo neighbourhood, the first tender in East Jerusalem since 2016.

On 28 August, the district court in Jerusalem ruled that the illegal outpost of Mizpe Kramim could be legalized under Israeli law, despite being built partially on private Palestinian land. The ruling was the first to rely on the so-called market regulation principle, which allows houses to be built in good faith on private land, without the consent of the owner to be retroactively legalized and the owner compensated. If the ruling is upheld in Israel's High Court of Justice, it could enable the legalization of additional outposts and housing units in settlements.

Demolitions and seizures of Palestinian-owned structures continued across the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Citing the absence of Israeli-issued building permits, which are nearly impossible for Palestinians to obtain, 117 structures were demolished or seized: 61 in Area C and 56 in East Jerusalem. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), that resulted in the displacement of 145 Palestinians, including 82 children, and affected the livelihoods of approximately 950 people.

In Khan Al-Ahmar/Abu Al-Helu, a Bedouin community of 181 people, Israeli authorities requisitioned land, levelled access routes and temporarily declared the area a closed military zone, in advance of the expected demolition of its structures. Following a protracted legal process, on 5 September, the Israeli High Court of Justice denied several petitions by residents to prevent the demolition. On 4 July, in Abu Nuwar, a Bedouin community of about 600 residents, 19 structures were demolished. OCHA reported that 51 people, including 33 children, were displaced. Later that month a donor-funded caravan

in the Bedouin community of Jabal Al-Baba, serving as a kindergarten for 28 children and as a women's centre, was also confiscated and dismantled. Those communities are located in or next to an area that is slated for settlement plans in the E-1 area, which, if constructed, would create a continuous built-up area between the Ma'ale Adumim and East Jerusalem.

In July, the Israeli Knesset approved a law transferring the jurisdiction over certain petitions against decisions by Israeli authorities in the West Bank from the High Court of Justice to the administrative affairs court in Jerusalem. That step could make it more difficult and costly to challenge the demolition or seizure of Palestinian properties in Area C.

On 11 September, the European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Federica Mogherini, called on Israeli authorities to reconsider the decision to allow the demolition of Khan Al-Ahmar, warning that "it would have grave humanitarian consequences" and contravene international humanitarian law. That call was reiterated by Germany, France, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom. I also issued a statement expressing the same concern over such action. On 13 September, the European Parliament also called for monetary compensation for financial losses, should Khan Al-Ahmar be demolished.

Let me turn to the issue of violence, which also remains an obstacle to peace. The reporting period saw significant incidents and escalation that brought Israel and Hamas almost to war on at least three occasions.

Palestinian protests at the Gaza fence continued on almost a daily basis. While most occasions remained fairly peaceful, militants placed improvised explosive devices, attempted to breach the fence and continued to send incendiary kites and balloons across the border. The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) responded with riot dispersal means and live fire. During protests throughout the reporting period, 29 Palestinians were killed or died of wounds sustained previously, including 10 children. Approximately 900 people were injured by live ammunition. One Israeli soldier was killed and another injured.

In successive rounds of hostilities, Hamas and other Palestinian militants fired approximately 500 rockets, Grad missiles and mortars from Gaza towards Israel. In response, the IDF fired approximately 400 missiles and tank shells at targets in Gaza. It destroyed three tunnels leading from Gaza into Israel. 18 Palestinians were killed, including 5 children, 118 injured, and 37 Israelis were injured in those exchanges. On at least three occasions the situation escalated dramatically. Calm was restored only after Egypt and the United Nations intervened to de-escalate tensions.

Incendiary kites and balloons continued to be launched from Gaza into neighbouring Israeli communities. In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 266 Palestinians, including 5 women and 54 children, were injured in clashes with Israeli security forces during search-and-arrest operations and demonstrations.

On 23 July, a 15-year-old Palestinian was killed during clashes in Bethlehem's Al-Duheisha refugee camp. Three days later, in the settlement of Adam, a 17-year-old Palestinian stabbed and killed an Israeli man and injured two others. On 17 August and 3 September, Israeli security forces shot dead an Israeli-Arab and a Palestinian in Jerusalem's Old City and in Hebron, respectively, after they reportedly attempted to carry out stabbing attacks against security forces.

On 27 July, clashes erupted at the Temple Mount/Haram Al-Sharif compound between Palestinians and Israeli security forces, where 10 Palestinians and four Israeli police officers were injured. On 16 September, in another attack a Palestinian teenager stabbed and killed an Israeli-American outside a shopping mall in the occupied West Bank. It is reprehensible that Hamas and other factions chose to glorify that attack.

Despite the call in resolution 2334 (2016) for the parties to refrain from acts of provocation, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric, such statements continued. Hamas leaders continued to incite violence, with one senior official speaking of "cleansing Palestine of the filth of Jews" and threatening to decapitate Israeli leaders. Fatah's official social media pages continued to glorify the perpetrators of previous attacks against Israelis and failed to condemn terror attacks against civilians. Some religious leaders and officials made inflammatory statements, accusing Israel of plotting to destroy the Al-Aqsa Mosque and denying the Jewish historic and religious connection to Jerusalem.

Meanwhile, some Israeli officials called for the targeting of Palestinians launching incendiary kites and balloons into Israel from Gaza and for the extrajudicial killings of Hamas officials. One member of the Knesset called for Israel to reconquer Gaza and insisted that Palestinians in Gaza either acquiesce to

Israel's sovereignty or emigrate. Others continued to provoke by rejecting the Palestinian right to statehood, supporting settlement growth and the annexation of parts of the West Bank.

Resolution 2334 (2016) reiterated the calls made by the Middle East Quartet for

> "affirmative steps to be taken immediately to reverse negative trends on the ground that are imperilling the two-State solution."

Some positive steps have been taken, including Israel releasing approximately $44 million of withheld Palestinian health stamp revenues, which is the result of continuing direct engagement of the Finance Ministries of both sides, as well as continued progress on Gaza reconstruction. The Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt remained largely open during the reporting period, with the number of people crossing reaching over 12,000 in both June and July.

The negative developments, however, outweigh the positive news. Most worrying perhaps is the continuing deterioration of the humanitarian, security and political situation in Gaza, as the implementation of the Egyptian-brokered October agreement remains stalled and the Palestinian Authority has not been able to take up its responsibilities in Gaza.

As we meet today, the power crisis in Gaza is coming to a head. The United Nations has run out of funding for emergency fuel, putting critical health, water and sanitation facilities at immediate risk of shutting down, while essential medicines are at critically low levels. On 5 September, the United Nations delivered the final stocks of available emergency fuel to Gaza. Despite calls for donors to urgently contribute, little additional funding was forthcoming.

The situation was worsened by the temporary closures of the Kerem Shalom crossing and reductions in the fishing zone that were introduced by Israel during the periods of escalation, as well as the continuing measures by the Palestinian Authority to reduce salaries, energy supplies and overall spending in Gaza. The United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator has released $1 million from the emergency pooled fund to cover fuel for hospitals and water and sanitation facilities to prevent a full collapse of essential services.

To address the chronic crisis in the occupied Palestinian territory, the humanitarian community appealed for nearly $550 million this year, through the humanitarian response plan, 75 per cent of which is for projects targeting Palestinians in Gaza. At present, the appeal is less than 29 per cent funded, one of the most poorly funded in the world.

Paragraph 5 of resolution 2334 (2016) called on Member States

> "to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied in 1967".

No such steps were taken during the reporting period. The resolution also called upon all parties to continue to exert collective efforts to launch credible negotiations. No progress was achieved in that respect.

The United States has repeatedly announced that it is continuing its efforts aimed at a comprehensive peace plan. In August, the Administration suspended more than $200 million in its fiscal year 2017 Economic Support Fund for the West Bank and Gaza, and a further $25 million for the East Jerusalem hospitals network. On 10 September, it closed the Palestine Liberation Organization Office in Washington, D.C., citing its failure to take steps towards meaningful negotiations with Israel and concerns with Palestinian attempts to prompt an investigation of Israel by the International Criminal Court.

The Palestinian Central Council convened in August and ratified the continued severance of political relations with the United States until the latter revisits its decision regarding Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees and settlements.

On 5 September, the Government of Paraguay announced that it would reverse the previous decision from May to relocate its Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem and move it back to Tel Aviv.

Since the escalation of hostilities in Gaza in July, the United Nations has led an unprecedented effort with the Governments of Egypt, Israel and other international partners to prevent another outbreak of hostilities, respond to the most urgent humanitarian needs and support the return of the legitimate Palestinian Government to Gaza, a crucial element in any political effort to resolve the wider conflict.

The United Nations has enhanced its capacity in Gaza to work with the Palestinian Government and Israeli counterparts to support donor implementation on all issues related to the Gaza Reconstruction

Mechanism and provide accountable and transparent reporting to donors.

The World Bank has increased its allocation from $55 million to $90 million for the West Bank and Gaza over the next year, part of which will be used to create approximately 4,400 short-term employment opportunities. The United Nations Development Programme has also accelerated its emergency economic assistance programme, with support from several donors.

I would now like to share some broad observations concerning the implementation of the provisions of resolution 2334 (2016) during the reporting period.

First, the expansion of Israeli settlements remains illegal under international law and continues to erode the viability of a two-State solution. Particularly alarming are legal and administrative steps that could consolidate and expand settlement activity deep in the West Bank, further undermining the contiguity of a future Palestinian State.

The persistent threat of demolitions and displacement of Palestinians in Area C, including in Khan Al-Ahmar/Abu Al- Helu, is of great concern. The 5 September decision of the High Court of Justice places the Bedouin community at imminent risk of demolition. Demolitions undermine the prospects for a two-State solution and are also in violation of international law.

Violence, terror and the risk of conflict in Gaza remain an obstacle to peace. I welcome the calm since 9 August, but I am very concerned by consistent attempts to undermine it. All sides — and I underline all — must continue their positive engagement with Egypt and the United Nations and do their part. Hamas and other armed militant groups must stop all provocations and attacks. Israel must improve the movement and access regime for Gaza. The Palestinian Authority must remain engaged in Gaza. The international community must address the urgent humanitarian needs. And, finally, Fatah and Hamas must engage in earnest with Egypt in order to bring back the legitimate Government to Gaza.

I once again call for all violent actions, which continue to endanger the lives of both Israelis and Palestinians, to stop immediately. Indiscriminate attacks are prohibited under international humanitarian law. I urge Hamas and other Palestinian militants to end the indiscriminate firing of rockets into southern Israel.

I reiterate that Israeli security forces have a responsibility to exercise maximum restraint in the use of live fire and must not resort to lethal force unless in response to an imminent threat of death or serious injury. The continued use of live fire by the Israeli Defense Forces is deeply concerning. The killing of children is absolutely unacceptable.

I call on the international community to join the United Nations in condemning violence and incitement, which continue to fuel a climate of mutual fear and mistrust while hindering efforts to bridge the gaps between both sides.

As explicitly outlined in the 2016 report of the Middle East Quartet (S/2016/595, annex), current trends are imperilling the viability of the two-State solution. There has been no positive movement by the parties to take steps to reverse the negative trends on the ground. By complying with their obligations under previous agreements and the relevant United Nations resolutions, the parties can, and must, reverse the current course.

Israel should make progress on the transition to greater Palestinian civil authority of powers and responsibilities in Area C, on improving Palestinian economic prospects, as well as access to housing, water, energy, communications, agriculture, and natural resources, and on significantly easing Palestinian movement restrictions.

The United Nations has been working tirelessly to address the deepening humanitarian and economic crisis on the ground. Support for emergency fuel is urgently needed to avoid a total collapse of critical services in hospitals and sewage treatment. The Deputy Special Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator, Jamie McGoldrick, made two emergency appeals to donors in August for new funding, and I reiterate the urgency of his calls. It is also critical that UNRWA be able to continue to deliver its vital services.

In addition, the United Nations is working with several donors to advance key interventions that will immediately improve the situation on the ground, both in Gaza and the West Bank. I urge donors to consider support for those activities, which play a vital role in preventing further escalation.

Twenty-five years have now passed since the signing of the Oslo Accords. It was a historic moment that captured the world's attention and filled Palestinians, Israelis and the region with hope that genuine peace

could be realized. Sadly, that courageous vision of lasting peace now lies in tatters.

We must restore that hope. There is an alternative to this perpetual cycle of violence. We must overcome the current impasse and refocus our efforts on ultimately returning to meaningful negotiations to end the occupation and bring about a just, lasting and comprehensive resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict — a resolution based on two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States, based on the 1967 lines and in line with the relevant United Nations resolutions and previous agreements. I urge all sides to continue to engage with each other and with the international community to preserve and advance its achievement.

Finally, let underline today that the urgency of the situation that we face on the ground is really desperate. Gaza could explode at any minute. We have a humanitarian responsibility to react. But we must also understand that it cannot be solved on the basis of humanitarian action alone. It must be solved with a political perspective to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We have a responsibility to support the parties in this prospect.

The President: I thank Mr. Mladenov for his statement.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I want to thank Mr. Nickolay Mladenov for his briefing to the Security Council on resolution 2334 (2016) and for his daily commitment, as well as that of his team.

In Gaza, the West Bank and Jerusalem, every passing day increases, bit by bit, the despair by reflecting a three-pronged reality. First, the false status quo actually covers up the daily deterioration on the ground. Secondly, the situation could, at any moment, degenerate into an full-blown crisis, as has been the case in Gaza for many long months. Finally, when peace prospects diminish on the ground, they also diminish in hearts, minds and words. It is that vicious cycle that is at play today. Generation after generation of Palestinians and Israelis are losing hope in a peaceful settlement to the conflict.

A quarter century, nearly to the date, has elapsed since the Oslo Accords were signed in Washington, D.C. Twenty-five years after Oslo, nearly three quarters of Palestinians, according to opinion polls, believe that their situation has deteriorated. Barely half of them still believe in a two-State solution.

Nevertheless, the observation that we consistently make in the Council remains valid. No viable alternative to the two-State solution has emerged since Oslo. The unique territorial structure that seems to take form before our eyes under the effects of the settlement policies will ultimately lead to the coexistence of two unequal classes of citizens on one territory. For Palestinians it would mark the abandonment of their aspirations to statehood, and for the Israelis the end of their democratic project. While it is essential to fill the current political vacuum, a peace plan not based on the internationally agreed parameters of two States would be doomed to failure. It is therefore essential that all negotiations take place within that framework, which in turn is based on international law and the relevant resolutions of the Council, including resolution 478 (1980), on Jerusalem, as well as resolution 2334 (2018), which brings us here today.

With regard to the latter resolution, 10 members of the Council, including France, requested that, in accordance with the established practice, written reports be submitted to the Council. We thank the Secretariat for the circulation of a written report last June (S/2018/614), and we encourage the continuation of that practice.

Today I would like to emphasize two points: the Israeli settlement policy in Area C and Jerusalem, which now threatens to irreversibly undermine the two-State solution — and I would refer to the risk of the imminent demolition of the village of Khan Al-Ahmar — and the situation in Gaza, which may at any time lead to an escalation in violence.

According to the judgement of the Supreme Court of Israel on 5 September, the decision to demolish the village of Khan Al-Ahmar is now entirely up to the Israeli Government. That decision, which has been in force since 12 September, can be implemented at any time. France, in conjunction with several of its European partners, has expressed its deep concern over that and calls on the Israeli authorities not to proceed with the demolition. The demolition of that Bedouin village, which would include the forced displacement

of its inhabitants, would contravene international humanitarian law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention, as well as the resolutions of the Council. Several structures that have received European funding, including one school, are being directly targeted. Two hundred and thirty inhabitants, including nearly 160 children, are being threatened with deportation.

In addition to its humanitarian consequences, the demolition would be disastrous, and probably irreversible, to the political landscape. It would pave the way for the settlement of the so-called E-1 area, which is of strategic importance for the two-State solution. It would separate the north and south of the West Bank and isolate East Jerusalem from the rest of the Palestinian territories. By destroying the continuity of the Palestinian territories, it would make it impossible for the two States to reach a solution, with a strategy of de facto annexation of the West Bank by Israel in its place. That would represent a significant responsibility, historically and for both peoples.

Secondly, the erosion of the two-State solution as a consequence of settlement activity in East Jerusalem and the West Bank must not make us forget the imminent risks facing Gaza. For the past six months, there has been a succession of violence in Gaza, against the backdrop of a humanitarian crisis of unprecedented severity. In the face of the terrible record of successive demonstrations along the separation barrier, France condemned the disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force and called on Israel to respect the right of Palestinians to demonstrate peacefully. We have also denounced the instrumentalization of demonstrations by Hamas and other armed groups. Finally, we condemned the firing of rockets and the use of incendiary devices directed at Israeli territory, as well as the construction of offensive tunnels by Hamas.

On several occasions in recent months, the Gaza Strip has found itself on the brink of a new armed conflict, as it experienced three times in the past decade. Each time, the worst was avoided, thanks in particular to the efforts of Egypt, which we especially welcome, and to the mediation work of Nickolay Maldenov, for which I am also grateful. But we know that, if the current situation persists, a large-scale escalation cannot be avoided indefinitely. It is then the people of Gaza who will once again pay the price. We must do everything we can to avoid it. It is up to the Council to speak with a strong voice to prevent an escalation. The silence it has observed since the beginning of the crisis is, every day, more deafening and, to be honest, incomprehensible.

Beyond an immediate de-escalation and respect for the 2014 ceasefire, there will be no lasting solution in Gaza without inter-Palestinian reconciliation within the framework of the Palestinian Liberation Organization principles and without restoring the prerogatives of the Palestinian Authority in Gaza. In that regard, we welcome the relaunching of the process begun in Cairo almost a year ago, which must be followed by a genuine commitment by the Palestinian Authority to improve the living conditions of the people in Gaza. Above all, only lifting the blockade, with the necessary security guarantees for Israel, will make it possible to meet the needs of the population.

In parallel with those efforts, we must give our full support to the Special Coordinator's proposals for the accelerated implementation of priority projects. We will have an opportunity to discuss that in more detail next week at the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of International Assistance to Palestinians meeting in New York. Those projects must be accompanied by quick-impact humanitarian measures, necessary to meet the immediate needs of the population and prevent further escalation.

In the same spirit, unprecedented international mobilization is needed to enable the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East to continue its essential activities and keep its schools open, without interruption, in Gaza and throughout the region. We will have an opportunity to call for such collective mobilization during the week of high-level meetings during the General Assembly. The stakes are high for the populations concerned, of course, but no less so for regional stability. In that context, we call on the United States to maintain its historic commitment to refugees and the Palestinian territories, with the necessary engagement of the international community.

France is a friend to both the Israelis and the Palestinians. It has no other interest than peace in the region and the possibility for the populations concerned to live in safety and dignity. As we all know, the destinies of Israelis and Palestinians are intertwined: neither of the two peoples will achieve their national aspirations in a sustainable way at the expense of the other. Twenty five years after the Oslo Accords, and in a context of increasing regional crisis, the Israeli-

Palestinian conflict has not lost any of its gravity, centrality and symbolic significance. The international community cannot turn away from it.

It is in that spirit that the President of the French Republic, Mr. Emmanuel Macron, will meet tomorrow in Paris with the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mr. Mahmoud Abbas. In that same spirit, there will be an exchange with the Israeli Prime Minister, Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, next week on the sidelines of the General Assembly. France's conviction is that our shared compass, more than ever, needs to be implementation, through negotiation, of a two-State solution — the only way to achieve just and lasting peace between Israel and Palestine. France will spare no effort in that regard.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I thank the Special Coordinator once again for his briefing and for the work that he is doing to improve the situation and bring it closer to peace, as well as for all the hard work of his teams on the ground.

The United Kingdom remains committed to achieving a two-State solution, leading to a safe and secure Israel, living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian State, with Jerusalem as a shared capital. We continue to believe that the best way to achieve that is through negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, and for all parties to focus on steps that are conducive to peace. As the French Ambassador said, some 25 years ago we concluded the Oslo Accords. It is doubly concerning, therefore, to see the recent developments on the ground on key aspects of resolution 2334 (2016). The level and rhetoric of hatred in dehumanization on all sides is repellent, and also dangerous.

The United Kingdom remains deeply concerned about the Israeli authorities' planned demolition of the village of Khan Al-Ahmar, which is located in an area of strategic importance for the contiguity of a Palestinian State. Its demolition threatens a major blow to the prospects for a two-State solution, with Jerusalem as the shared capital, by paving the way for settlement building in Area E-1. The United Nations has said that demolition could amount to forcible transfer in violation of international humanitarian law. The recent decision of the Israeli Supreme Court does not mandate demolition. Demolition remains at the discretion of the Israeli Government. We therefore call on the Israeli Government, once again, not to go ahead with its plan to demolish the village, including the school, and displace the residents.

I share concerns about the situation at the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which is facing severe financial pressure at a time of increased demand. We support a just, fair, agreed and realistic settlement of Palestinian refugees. Until that point we remain firmly committed to supporting UNRWA and Palestinian refugees across the Middle East. We are concerned about the impact the recent United States decision on funding. We believe UNRWA is a lifeline for millions of Palestinian refugees across the Middle East. We have ourselves so far provided approximately $67 million to UNRWA, $59 million to its core services and $7.8 million in humanitarian aid in Syria. We hope that will help meet immediate needs and that programmes and services can remain uninterrupted. We call on the international community and other donors to follow that and step up support to UNRWA to ensure its vital services are not interrupted. At the same time, I would like to stress that, for UNRWA to have a sustainable future, it needs to continue to promote realistic and technical cost-saving reforms. The United Kingdom will continue to work closely with UNRWA and donors on how best to ensure the continuity of essential services to Palestinian refugees at this time.

Lastly, and as the French Ambassador said, there is an urgent need to address the awful and deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza. The United Kingdom recently announced a new $49 million programme to support economic development in Gaza and in the West Bank. We have released $2.6 million to UNICEF to help provide up to 1 million Gazans with access to clean water and sanitation, and we have given $2 million to the International Committee of the Red Cross appeal to support emergency medical needs. We are supportive of efforts to reduce the conflict in Gaza. It is in everyone's interest that peace and stability prevail in Israel and in the occupied Palestinian territories. We fully support the efforts of the Special Coordinator to improve the situation in Gaza, and we urge the relevant parties to engage fully with his proposals.

We also would like to see progress on humanitarian and economic proposals at next week's meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians, and we call upon both Israel and the Palestinian Authority to deliver on their outstanding commitments. We reiterate

the need for Israel to reduce its movement and access restrictions on the people of Gaza, and for Hamas to commit to non-violence and fully end its attacks on Israel.

In order to see a long-term improvement in Gaza, momentum around Fatah-Hamas reconciliation needs to be maintained. The United Kingdom is supportive of Egyptian efforts to enable the Palestinian authority to resume control of Gaza. And we encourage all parties to engage constructively. The recent deaths on both sides of the conflict, including the deaths of three Palestinians in Gaza over the past week and the stabbing of an Israeli in a settlement on 16 September, reflect the need for progress to end the cycle of violence. We strongly urge all the relevant parties to respect international law, de-escalate tensions, exercise restraint and prevent occurrences that could jeopardize the lives of Palestinians and Israelis.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Special representative Mladenov for his substantive briefing on the Middle East settlement.

Today's meeting is taking place on a landmark day for the history of the peace process in the Middle East. Forty years ago, the Camp David Agreements were arrived at. Twenty-five years ago, the Oslo Accords were struck. Those components, alongside other parameters agreed upon by the international community, have comprised the bedrock of a political process that was also enriched by important Security Council resolutions, the Madrid guiding principles, the Arab Peace Initiative, and the road map of the Middle East Quartet of international mediators on the Middle East settlement.

At the heart of this international legal basis is the two-State solution for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the implementation of which is contingent upon the need for agreement to be reached on all final-status issues, including Jerusalem, refugees, borders and security, through direct dialogue between Israelis and the Palestinian people. Unfortunately, those landmark dates arrived amid troubling developments in Middle-East policy. Indicators are increasingly pointing to an aspiration to undermine what has been developed, including with the participation of the United States, namely, the platform for a settlement. How else can one regard and view the recent decision taken by Washington to close the Palestine Liberation Organization office in the United States capital? We genuinely fail to understand the withdrawal of financing for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the recent refusal to continue to facilitate the operation of two hospitals in East Jerusalem. Bilateral commitments have collapsed. Even important security-related cooperation is under threat. Such measures do major damage to collective efforts to arrive at a comprehensive Palestinian-Israeli settlement in the Middle East.

There is still time to rescind the decisions taken. We see the response in the revision of the current approaches, which have grave consequences for the prospects of the peace process, and a return to the roots of settlement. There needs to be an emphasis on rekindling international cooperation in the spirit of Russian-United States co-sponsorship, as well as of the Madrid process. That of course led to the establishment of the Middle East Quartet, which, as we see it, is the most effective mechanism and which was approved by the Security Council. It is necessary to revitalize work to launch direct Palestinian-Israeli dialogue. In that connection, what remains relevant is our initiative to organize in Moscow a personal meeting between the Palestinian and Israeli leaders. It is necessary to reverse existing trends, which are a consequence of unilateral decisions. I am referring to the cessation of settlement activities by Israel in the occupied territory, inflammatory rhetoric and violence on the part of both sides. Of course, one cannot overlook humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people, above all in the Gaza strip. At the same time, we proceed from the premise that robust assistance to Gaza needs to dovetail with rebuilding unity among the Palestinian ranks.

We would note the important work carried out by the United Nations, specifically UNRWA, in the occupied Palestinian territories and in refugee camps. We welcome and support the inclusion of regional players in Middle East settlement. We note, and highly value, the role of Egypt and Jordan in Palestinian affairs. Russia's position on a Middle East settlement was and remains principled and consistent. We firmly believe that a fair solution to the Palestinian issue is of key significance to remedy the situation throughout the region. A pursuit of the conflict between Israel and Palestine, on the contrary, will constantly poison the overall international atmosphere, will have a detrimental effect on efforts to resolve other regional crises and will fuel terrorism. We would particularly draw attention to the importance of improving relations within the Arab

family. We are interested in a united and potent League of Arab States where all disputes are resolved on the basis of mutually respectful dialogue. We advocate the revival of multilateral efforts on Middle-East issues as a whole. We propose that colleagues thoroughly consider our vision to establish confidence-building measures in the Persian Gulf, which eventually should lead to the establishment of a pan-regional security architecture. That is important not only to resolve the crises in Syria, Yemen and Libya but also to prevent potential conflicts.

Mr. Tenya (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We appreciate the convening of this meeting. We are grateful to Mr. Nickolay Mladenov for his detailed briefing this afternoon, which draws attention to the tragic situation in Gaza.

We would like to emphasize three points that we believe need urgent attention.

First is putting an end to the settlement, demolition and eviction practices in the occupied Palestinian territories. Peru regrets and notes with concern the continuation of such practices, which are contrary to international law, seriously jeopardize the territorial integrity of the Palestinian State and undermine the possibility of reaching a political solution. We are particularly concerned about the humanitarian impact that would arise from the demolition of a group of structures in the village of Khan Al-Ahmar, which, as Mr. Mladenov mentioned, houses a community of 181 Palestinians, more than half of whom are minors. Such practices must cease, in strict compliance with the resolutions adopted by the Security Council, in particular resolution 2334 (2016).

My second point is that we believe that it is important to reverse the deteriorating humanitarian situation. We note with dismay the profound and ongoing deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, exacerbated by the recent incidents of violence and the cuts in the funding of assistance programmes. In order to overcome that reality, we believe that it is essential to address the lack of basic goods and services, as well as the blockade to which millions of Palestinians are subjected and which provides an ideal setting for those who promote violence and extremism. In that regard, we welcome the fact that the Special Envoy and his team have identified specific infrastructure and development projects in Gaza.

We also believe that it is essential to advance the process of intra-Palestinian reconciliation and that the agreement reached last October under the auspices of Egypt be reflected in concrete actions and results. We believe that that should make it possible for the legitimate Palestinian Authority to regain effective control of Gaza and should facilitate the resumption of direct negotiations with Israel.

We must also reiterate the need to provide the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East with steady and predictable funding and to mobilize to that end the solidarity of the international community, in particular the countries with the greatest resources and those committed to peace and stability in the region.

Lastly, my third point is that we believe that it is important to end the violence and to commit to achieving a political agreement. We regret the fact that the parties continue their hostile positions. Peru condemns the indiscriminate violence of Hamas, the disproportionate Israeli responses and the rhetoric of confrontation on the part of both sides. We emphasize the importance and the urgency of having a minimum level of understanding to assist in the reversal of the negative trends on the ground and in the resumption of direct negotiations between the parties, all with a view to achieving the only viable solution: two States coexisting with secure and mutually recognized borders.

I would like to conclude by commending the presentation last June, in written form, of the quarterly report (S/2018/614) on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016), which was requested of the Secretary-General by 10 members of the Security Council (see S/2018/454). We hope to have a new written report in December in order to lend greater transparency to the treatment of this delicate issue.

Mr. Ma Zhaoxu (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank Special Coordinator Mladenov for his briefing.

The question of Palestine is at the heart of the Middle East issue and is fundamental to peace in the region. The recent developments in Palestine and Israel are deeply troubling. The prospects for a two-State solution remain elusive, since the resumption of the Palestinian-Israeli peace talks faces difficulties and the settlement activities and the demolition of Palestinian properties continue unabated.

The situation in the Gaza Strip remains fragile, marred by the ongoing casualties among Palestinian

civilians. As a result of the violent clashes, the risk of the conflict escalating can hardly be ignored. Given the current dire situation, the international community needs to step up its efforts to promote a political solution to the Palestinian question. The Security Council in particular should take the lead and set an example.

First, the international community should uphold the two-State solution, which represents the right direction to resolve the Palestinian issue. The international community should increase its political and diplomatic efforts on the basis of the United Nations resolutions, the Madrid principles, including land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It is imperative to effectively implement the Security Council resolutions, cease all settlement activities, stop the demolition of Palestinian properties, including Bedouin villages, immediately lift the blockade on the Gaza Strip and take steps to prevent violence against civilians.

Secondly, the international community should remain united in a concerted effort to promote the early resumption of the peace talks between Palestine and Israel. All the parties concerned should narrow their differences, fully engage in dialogue and consultation and avoid any unilateral action that may exacerbate the situation so as to create the necessary environment for the resumption of dialogue. The international community should work together to find a viable way forward to overcome the current stalemate. Those that have considerable influence on the Middle East in particular should play a constructive role in that regard.

Thirdly, sensitive issues, such as the status of Jerusalem, should be properly addressed. The issue of the status of Jerusalem is complex and delicate. All parties should prioritize peace and calm in the region and act with caution to avoid triggering new regional disputes. All parties should respect the historical plurality, uphold fairness and justice, implement international consensus, strive for peaceful coexistence and act upon the relevant United Nations resolutions and the international consensus so as to reach a negotiated settlement that accommodates the interests of all the parties.

The international community should not forget the more than 5 million Palestinian refugees. For more than six decades, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East has played an important role in alleviating the suffering of the Palestinian people and in promoting regional peace and stability. The Agency currently faces many challenges, including a lack of funding. We appreciate the increased contributions of the relevant parties to the Agency and call on all the parties to provide additional and steady support to the Agency and to the countries hosting Palestinian refugees in order to alleviate the pressure on refugee relief efforts. For the past 30 years and more, China has made annual financial contributions to the Agency. This year, in the light of the urgent needs of the Agency, we have increased our contribution accordingly. China will continue to provide the best possible support to the Agency for the discharge of its mandate.

China firmly supports the Palestinian people in establishing a fully sovereign and independent Palestinian State on the basis of the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. We support the greater integration of Palestine into the community of nations. China will continue to play a constructive role in promoting the Middle East peace process in line with the four-point proposal set out by Chinese President Xi Jinping to resolve the Palestinian question.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): I would like to thank Special Coordinator Mladenov for his clear briefing today. I also thank him for his reminder about the urgency and volatility of the situation on the ground and about the fact that, 25 years after the historic Oslo Accords, we need to have a serious and frank discussion about the obstacles to peace and threats to the two-State solution, which represents international consensus. I would like to address three elements of resolution 2334 (2016): settlements, violence and differentiation.

The Israeli settlement policy continues unabated despite repeated international condemnation. During the reporting period, the Israeli authorities announced plans and tenders for thousands of new settlement units in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, while Palestinian homes are being demolished and people are at risk of being forcibly transferred. We second the calls from both the United Nations and the European Union (EU) to the Israeli authorities to reconsider their decision to demolish the Bedouin village of Khan Al-Ahmar in area E-1. It would have serious consequences for its residents, the majority of whom are children, as well as for the contiguity of the Palestinian State and Palestinian access to East Jerusalem. Israel's settlement policy is illegal under international law, as are actions

taken in that context, including the demolitions of Palestinian communities and possible forced transfers of the population. The policy undermines prospects for peace and the viability of the two-State solution. We therefore urge the Israeli authorities to reconsider and reverse those policies.

We call for steps to prevent acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terrorism, provocation and destruction. In line with resolution 2334 (2016) and well-established EU policy, we call for the distinction between Israel within pre-1967 borders and occupied territory. As is obvious from the Special Coordinator's briefing today, progress on implementing that part of resolution 2334 (2016) is lacking. We urge all States to act in that regard.

Since our previous meeting, in August (see S/PV.8239), we welcome the fact that the situation in and around Gaza has stabilized somewhat thanks to international efforts, not least by the Special Coordinator and Egypt. But, as we heard, the situation remains tense and fragile and, for the sake of long-term stability, we underline the importance of all relevant parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, taking part in such efforts. While another devastating conflict between Israel and Hamas may have been averted, it is imperative to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Interventions with quick, direct and immediate impact on daily lives are possible and urgently needed for the population in Gaza living under dire circumstances. We look forward to discussing that issue in greater detail at the meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians next week, but let me underline that it is crucial to see a lifting of the Israeli closure regime, an end to acts of violence and acts of provocation, progress in intra-Palestinian reconciliation and a return of the Palestinian Authority to Gaza.

We are all aware that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) plays a critical role on the ground. It provides education, health and other essential services to Palestine refugees, but it also constitutes a key factor for stability in the region, including in neighbouring countries, until the final-status issue on refugees has been settled. We therefore regret the decision of the United States not to provide further funding to UNRWA after decades of political and financial support. The United States has traditionally been the largest donor, and its support has been much appreciated. That decision has contributed to a serious financial crisis at UNRWA, with a current funding shortfall of $186 million. A few weeks ago, UNRWA schools for more than half a million Palestinian children were opened. However, the Agency's funding beyond September is not secured. The remaining financial gap needs to be filled for schools to remain open.

Sweden is among the top donors to UNRWA. In August we signed a multiannual partnership agreement worth over $200 million. We are fully committed to supporting UNRWA at this critical juncture. Together with our partners, including Jordan, whose commitment to UNRWA we commend, we have sought to mobilize political and financial support over recent months. We will also use the occasion of the high-level week of the General Assembly to that end. We call on all countries to step up support, since the shortfall is unprecedented and, as mentioned, risks spurring instability and violent radicalization in both Gaza and the wider region.

Unfortunately, the Oslo Accords did not bring about the peace that both Israelis and Palestinians deserve. We reaffirm our support for an end to the occupation and for the two-State solution, based on international law, the relevant United Nations resolutions and previous agreements. There simply is no viable alternative to the two-State solution, which is the only way the legitimate aspirations of both peoples can be attained. Yet, as we have heard today, that goal is becoming increasingly distant by the day. We therefore need to redouble our collective efforts to salvage the two-State solution. The international community and regional stakeholders have a key role to play in revitalizing meaningful peace negotiations, which require the full participation of women. The Council, too, has a role to play, as it did when resolution 2334 (2016) was adopted.

We often speak in the Chamber about how important it is that the decisions of the Council be respected. That is why we are gravely concerned about the clear lack of implementation of resolution 2334 (2016) and why we were surprised that no report of the Secretary-General was circulated prior to today's meeting. We recall that the provision of written reports is standard practice in the Council, as stipulated by presidntial note S/2017/507. A report was circulated in June (S/2018/614), in line with the request made by 10 members of the Council. We encourage the continuance of that practice and look forward to receiving a written report for the next quarterly reporting period.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): At the outset, I would like to thank Special Coordinator Nickolay Mladenov for his very comprehensive briefing on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016).

Twenty-five years ago, the first Oslo Accord was signed. Despite its many shortcomings, the agreement represented a historic compromise. Unfortunately, since then the conflict has not seen significant positive moves towards achieving peace. On the contrary, we have seen that the recent security situation in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory has become more tense. Many times over the past couple of weeks, we have expressed great concern about the tragic loss of civilian lives on both sides. We have appealed to Israel to use proportionate force. We have also called on the Palestinians to stop indiscriminate and deliberate rocket firings from Gaza to Israel and to refrain from causing fires by launching incendiary kites and balloons.

Let me again underline that all sides must fully comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and human rights law. Recent developments on the ground clearly point to an urgent need to continue the de-escalation process. We believe that a negotiated two-State solution and the resolution of all final-status issues, including Jerusalem, settlements, Palestinian refugees, borders and security arrangements, remain a realistic way to fulfil the legitimate aspirations of both parties and achieve long-term peace.

We should strengthen cooperation with the countries of the region, especially Egypt and Jordan, which would have a real impact on the de-escalation of tensions in Israeli-Palestinian relations. We appeal to both sides to refrain from unilateral steps that prejudge the outcome of final-status negotiations and expect them to demonstrate, through their actions and policies, their commitment to peace. In more general terms, let me underline that Poland supports a two-State solution under which the national aspirations of both parties to the conflict would be met, including the Palestinian right to self-determination and independence, as well as the Israeli right to ensure its security and the normalization of relations with Arab States.

Unfortunately, so far we have not seen any significant positive moves towards achieving that goal. The situation in the Gaza Strip is extremely worrisome. There is a lack of progress in political, security and humanitarian processes in Gaza. The prevailing lack of decisive steps towards the return of the legitimate Palestinian Government to Gaza, despite Egypt's best efforts to revive the process, is detrimental to Palestinian aspirations to statehood, contributes to the worsening of the humanitarian crisis and risks escalation. Undoubtedly, progress in the Palestinian reconciliation process would contribute to improving the situation on the ground.

Unfortunately, provocation, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric continue on both sides. In our opinion, such acts constitute a significant obstacle to the reactivation of the peace process. It must also be stated that, as a result of such incitement and inflammatory rhetoric, we have observed an increased number of dangerous incidents, some of which involve children, who should be particularly protected.

While we are on the subject of youth, we are deeply concerned by the deteriorating financial situation of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. A lack of hope and real perspectives for young generations — especially in Gaza — could very easily be exploited by inflammatory rhetoric. The effects of reducing this support can have serious security and humanitarian consequences, not only in the Palestinian territories but also in other countries hosting refugees. The Agency already faces a great challenge in upholding its mandate to preserve its key services like education and health care. In the absence of a lasting political solution, the international community cannot abdicate its responsibility and duty towards the Palestinian refugees to ensure the continuation of the Agency's work on a sound financial basis.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the long-standing European Union position that all settlement activity is illegal under international law and continues to undermine the practical prospects and hopes for peace. In this context, I also wish to reiterate the call issued by the United Nations Coordinator for Humanitarian and Development Activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory for plans to demolish Khan Al-Ahmar/Abu Al-Helu to be cancelled. Not only is the community at imminent risk of demolition and displacement, but such a move would also set a significant precedent that may affect other Bedouin communities in Area C.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation thanks Mr. Nikolay Mladenov for the information he has provided today.

I would like to begin my statement by expressing our concern at the fact that a written report on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016) was not circulated, although it had been requested by 10 members of the Council in a letter dated 14 May and was acted upon in June, when the report was distributed in good time. I thank the Secretary-General for having acceded to our request at that time, and we reiterate that this should be a recurring practice for all reports. We stress the importance of having written reports provided to delegations because it allows us to have first-hand information relating to the complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities, which is critical to safeguarding the two-State solution in accordance with resolution 2334 (2016).

Unfortunately, the Government of Israel continues to demonstrate its disdain for the resolutions adopted by the Security Council. Its administrative and legal acts continue to dangerously foment negative trends on the ground and are used as justification by the security forces to take part in violent action against the Palestinian people and their property.As we were informed today by Mr. Mladenov, under the pretext of an absence of building permits, the Government of Israel has demolished or confiscated 25 structures belonging to Palestinian families in Area C and in East Jerusalem. As a result of this arbitrary action, 47 people — including 23 children — have been displaced and the livelihoods of 108 civilians seriously affected.

My delegation forcefully rejects the deadly attacks of the Israeli armed forces on the Palestinian civilian population, including those reported by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in its report on the protection of civilians. In the report, OCHA details the murder by the Israeli army of three Palestinians, including two children, with 666 wounded between 28 August and 10 September as a result of the use of live fire. The report also details a total of 50 Palestinian casualties during the attempt of 10 boats to set sail from Gaza to break the Israeli naval blockade as part of the so-called Great March of Return. These incidents culmminated in the ships being impounded by the Israeli navy and, as usual, the use of lethal weapons of war and tear gas.

We are concerned about the dreadful unemployment among Palestinians in the occupied territories. The unemployment rate is 27 per cent — the highest in the world, according to a report of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, which also warns that the impact is higher on women and young people.

We also categorically reject the politicization of humanitarian assistance engaged in by some Member States as they withdraw their economic support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), justifying their decision by claiming that the school, health and assistance services provided by the Agency are wanting. Bolivia offers its warmest commendation to UNRWA for its humanitarian work in assisting the more than 5.4 million Palestinian men and women who find themselves refugees in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. Given this priority need, we call on the States Members of the Organization to continue making their valuable economic contributions to the Agency in the understanding that the current crisis has the sole effect of worsening of the quality of life for all Palestinian refugees.

As on other occasions, Bolivia expresses its firm commitment to all international efforts to find a peaceful solution to the situation and, in this regard, endorses such initiatives as the Quartet road map, the Madrid principles, the Arab Peace Initiative and others that guarantee just and lasting peace so that both peoples are able to live within internationally recognized and secure borders.

Bolivia is convinced that the only long-term option for resolving this occupation is the two-State solution, ultimately leading to a free, sovereign and independent Palestinian State within the pre-1967 international borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we thank Mr. Nickolay Mladenov for his valuable and comprehensive briefing today, and for reminding the Security Council and the international community of the dangerous situation in the occupied Palestinian territory. We underline once again the State of Kuwait's full support for his concerted efforts to achieve lasting, fair and comprehensive peace for the Palestinian people. This repercussions of this long-standing problem have been aggravated on a daily basis and affected the people who have suffered the hardship of occupation for over five decades.

> "If new funds are not received immediately, we will be facing a potentially catastrophic breakdown

> in essential service delivery... Services provided at hospitals, clinics, as well as sewage treatment, water and sanitation facilities will cease... Hospitals in the Gaza Strip only have enough fuel to support service provision just over two weeks, in total, with some facilities at greater risk... putting the lives of over 500 vulnerable patients at risk each day. These include patients being treated in intensive care; new-born babies in neonatal units; patients requiring emergency surgery."

Those are the words of Mr. Jamie McGoldrick, Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, who appealed to the world and the donor community to prevent a new catastrophe; this time, a health catastrophe for the people of Gaza. It is no exaggeration to warn that just a few weeks separate Gaza from a catastrophic collapse in basic humanitarian services, according to Mr. Mladenov. That must cause us to redouble our efforts to protect civilians and avoid this dark scenario by compelling Israel to respect and implement the relevant Security Council resolutions, while stopping all its illegal and illegitimate practices.

Yesterday, our appeals were aimed at averting the emergence of a humanitarian crisis due to the closure of the vital Karam Abu Salem crossing by Israel, the occupying Power. Today, the Palestinian people continue to face multiple challenges. Numbers and statistics do not lie. More than 4,800 patients in the Gaza Strip are dire daily need of basic health care.

Mr. Mladenov's briefing tells us once again that the situation in Gaza is still on the brink of the abyss, especially after the fall of a number of martyrs and wounded. Three Palestinian citizens, including a 12-year-old boy, were recently killed in addition to 248 citizens injured, 80 of them were hit by live bullets. That raises the number to 180 people who have been killed since the beginning of the peaceful Great March of Return on 30 March. We strongly condemn these systematic Israeli crimes against unarmedPalestinian civilians, which amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity under international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

In addition, the occupying authorities have given orders for bulldozers and demolition machines to begin moving towards the Al-Khan Al-Ahmar area after the Israeli Supreme Court rejected the petition filed by the Bedouin community of that area. This act threatens to displace 80 Palestinian families, which means about 190 persons, of whom 53 per cent are children. The reason for that is to implement the so-called Greater Jerusalem Project, including the settlement project called E-1, to vacate the area of all Palestinian presence, separate the southern West Bank from the centre and isolate the occupied city of Jerusalem from the West Bank. That constitutes a serious violation of human rights and international humanitarian law, while undermining the efforts towards a two-State solution.

In that regard, we reiterate our demand that the Israeli occupation Power be obliged to respect and implement resolution 2334 (2016), which underscored that Israeli settlements constitute a flagrant violation of international law and an obstacle to peace. We welcome the first written report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/614), which was issued in June, on the implementation of that resolution. We regret that no such report was issued this month, and we look forward to the issuance of periodic written reports regarding the implementation of that resolution starting in December in response to a request by 10 States members of the Council, and in line with the established practice and the note by the President S/2017/507.

Unfortunately, the basic services provided by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to more than 5 million registered Palestinian refugees are facing great pressure as a result of the severe financial crisis of the Agency. We had believed that its previous financial crisis could not get any worse, but today we find that these challenges have doubled and now pose a direct threat to those refugees as a result of UNRWA's fiscal deficit. We urge donor countries to continue to provide the necessary and sustainable financial support for the Agency's programmes and activities. Funding the Agency is the responsibility of the international community and its burden cannot be borne by specific States. However, the total amount provided by the State of Kuwait has exceeded $70 million in the past four years alone. We will maintain this support alongside many other countries.

The special session of the Council of the League of Arab States, which was held at the ministerial level on 12 September to discuss the UNRWA crisis, fully supported the mandate given to the Agency under General Assembly resolution 302 (IV). It rejected attempts to end or reduce the role and mandate of the Agency through systematic campaigns against it. It called on the international community to commit itself

to the Agency mandate and to ensure resources and financial contributions to its budget and activities in a sustainable manner so that it can continue to play its role in providing basic services to the victims of the Nakba. That is a right which the international community has a responsibility to fulfil, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 1948.

Unfortunately, there is once again overriding tension in Jerusalem due to the provocative incursions launched by extremist settler groups in the courtyard of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, covered by Israeli occupying forces, which have released tear gas on civilians and detained dozens of worshippers and Mosque guards, as well as removing officials from the Islamic Endowments Department. We renew our rejection and condemnation of any Israeli violation of holy sites, especially attempts to change the historical and legal status of the Al-Aqsa Mosque or to partition it, and to undermine the freedom of Muslim prayers therein. In that regard, we commend the decision of the Government of Paraguay to refrain from moving its Embassy to Jerusalem, in respect of international law and the relevant internationally legitimate resolutions.

In conclusion, what I have outlined is only a glimpse of the suffering of the unarmed Palestinian people; it is only a small part of the scourges facing our Palestinian brothers in the occupied territories. Most importantly, what I have outlined must stir our consciences and compel us to put an end to the injustices that the Palestinian people have suffered for decades. Everyone in the Council is all too aware that the Palestinian question is a top priority of every Muslim and Arab. There can be no lasting peace and security as long as the occupation continues. The resolutions of international legitimatcy, the Quartet road map, the principle of land for peace and the Arab Peace Initiative are the cornerstones of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace. Those would provide the Palestinian people with their legitimate political rights and the establishment of their independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): We thank the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, for his briefing on the latest developments with regard to the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

We remain concerned that negative actions taken by the parties continue to stoke tensions in the region, and we are saddened by the deaths of innocent civilians. It is absolutely vital that the parties refrain from actions that do not contribute to making progress, but instead increase frustration and mistrust.

The security and humanitarian situation in Gaza continues to be a source of concern, and making every possible effort to avoid the worst is still a matter of priority. We hope that some of the events planned during the high-level week will help to mobilize the necessary international assistance to meet the needs of the Palestinians. We continue to support United Nations engagement, in close coordination with Egypt and all concerned parties, to address the situation in Gaza. Progress in the Egyptian-led reconciliation process is key, and the parties must be urged to cooperate for the sake of their own people, who have been suffering for far too long.

Finally, 25 years after the signing of the Oslo Accords, peace in the Middle East and Palestine continues to elude us. The need to reinvigorate efforts aimed at achieving a comprehensive, lasting and just solution on the basis of the two-State formula is very clear. In that regard, facilitating the resumption of direct negotiations between the parties is vital. It is incumbent upon the Council to support such efforts for the sake of peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians and peace in the broader Middle Eastern region.

Mr. Ipo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the convening of this briefing on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. We thank Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, whose briefing oriented us on the multiple and complex challenges to peace and stability in a region deeply affected by the Israeli-Palestinian crisis.

Among the hotbeds of tension in the Middle East, the Israeli-Palestinian issue is undoubtedly the most complex crisis the international community has ever faced, having been unable to provide a definitive and universally acceptable response in 70 years. Côte d'Ivoire, which has always advocated dialogue and the peaceful settlement of disputes, regrets the lack of a consensual and viable framework for consultation since the deadlock in the Oslo Accords, which had raised hopes for a lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians. My country therefore reiterates its call on the Israeli and Palestinian leaders to move beyond the current situation and to resume dialogue in order

to consolidate past gains and create the conditions conducive to the achievement of a just and lasting peace.

My country, which attaches as much importance to the security of the State of Israel as to the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, reaffirms its strong support for the solution of two States peacefully coexisting within the 1967 borders. Côte d'Ivoire therefore encourages all parties to work for peace in order to put an end to the vicious cycle of violence. To that end, it calls for the extension of the current ceasefire and welcomes Israel's reopening of the Erez crossing.

In the current context, the resumption of dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians is not merely a necessity; it is above all a matter of urgency the resolution of which could help to contain the seeds of potential violence. That is why my country supports France's 15 January 2017 initiative, which led to the adoption by 70 States and international organizations of a joint declaration reaffirming the international community's commitment to the two-State solution. The declaration also calls for a settlement of the crisis based on the relevant Council resolutions.

On the humanitarian front, Côte d'Ivoire encourages donors to continue and increase initiatives to assist Palestinians in distress. In that regard, it welcomes Jordan's announcement to organize, on 27 September in New York, a conference to mobilize the financial support needed to maintain the activities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, which provides assistance to 3 million Palestinians in need.

Côte d'Ivoire is convinced that peace is possible when it is supported by the courage and commitment of those who transcend the deepest divisions and hatred. We therefore hope that one day very soon, Israelis and Palestinians will be able to overcome their deep, but certainly surmountable divisions in order to engage in a fruitful dialogue with a view to achieving a lasting settlement based on the two-State solution to a conflict that has gone on for too long.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): I thank Special Coordinator Mladenov for his very comprehensive and objective update on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016). We are closely following his negotiations with the key countries on this issue. In particular, we appreciate Mr. Mladenov's meetings with politicians of the Israeli, Palestinian and regional leadership, as well as Russian and European Union diplomats, in an attempt to restore calm and expand the range of humanitarian assistance provided to that troubled zone.

We echo the warnings of the United Nations that there is a cycle of conflicts in the Middle East that are a cause for serious concern. They are raising tensions at all levels and in numerous contexts, including the situations in Syria, Yemen and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

We have carefully followed the latest news on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016). Since we too signed the letter of 14 May on the reporting on the implementation of that resolution, we note that no written report has been circulated for this meeting, as requested in our joint letter. We all welcomed the circulation of a written report on 14 June, and we believe that it is important to continue with the standard practice. We look forward to receiving a written report ahead of the next reporting period in December.

Kazakhstan calls on both sides to honour their respective commitments under all Security Council resolutions that have been adopted over the 50 years since 1967. The Council must ensure compliance with resolution 2334 (2016). We therefore call in particular for a complete freeze on the construction of settlements. The deliberate policy of demolishing Palestinian buildings and expanding settlements in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem, and the transfer of those lands for the exclusive use by one party, undermine the viability of the two-State solution.

In that regard, we are concerned by the intention of the Israeli authorities to demolish a Bedouin village that is home to a community of 181 people. Such actions undermine the establishment of a viable Palestinian State. At the same time, Kazakhstan is alarmed at the announcement by the Israeli Civil Administration of the plan to expand the illegal Israeli settlement of Tina Omarim in the town of Al-Dahriyeh, in the southern occupied West Bank district of Hebron. We call on the Israeli authorities to halt the demolition and stop efforts to resettle Palestinian communities in the West Bank.

With regard to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, Kazakhstan reiterates the critical need of supporting that important entity in the light of its very significant work, especially since the situation in Gaza is desperate. Over a decade of blockade has deprived the people of their basic rights and left over two-thirds

of the population dependent on humanitarian aid. My country also underscores the importance of achieving intra-Palestinian unity. It is absolutely vital to bring all Palestinian factions together and to unite them under a legitimate and democratic Palestinian Authority. My delegation also appreciates the efforts of the Russian Federation and Egypt to ensure intra-Palestinian consolidation and urges all Palestinian political parties and movements to integrate into one national political structure.

Kazakhstan calls upon the Middle East Quartet — the United States, Russia, the European Union and the United Nations — to revive the work of that international body. We believe that resuming the Quartet's indispensable negotiations on the Middle East settlement will help to consolidate multilateral efforts for a peaceful settlement of this conflict.

Lastly, we call upon the leaders of Israel, Palestine and all other involved parties to take concrete steps to preserve the possibility of peaceful coexistence and the solution of two States existing side by side. It should be based, as we always say in the Council, on the inalienable rights of Palestinians to statehood and Israel's right to security.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): I would like to start by thanking Mr. Mladenov for his overview of recent developments. It is a sobering list that underlines the urgent need for positive steps. We commend him and his team for their persistent efforts for peace. We also thank him for his briefing on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016).

Let me refer to the letter that was sent to the Secretary-General in May, signed by 10 of the current Security Council members, in which we requested written reports on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016). We welcomed the written report we received in June and look forward to receiving written reports in the future.

I have three points to make: first, the anniversary of the first Oslo agreement; secondly, the threats to the two-State solution; and thirdly, the situation in Gaza.

First, I would like to look back at the 25 years since Oslo. On 13 September 1993, the first Oslo Accords were signed. The handshake between Rabin and Arafat was historic and it heralded a period in which peace could be achieved, or so we all anticipated or hoped. Much has been accomplished since then. The Palestinian Authority has been set up, a transfer of competences has taken place and the Palestinian institutions were judged to be ready to take on the responsibilities of a State. That is no small feat in such a short period.

However, the process remains incomplete. The transfer of responsibilities has stopped. The division between Gaza and the West Bank is entrenching itself further. Settlements continue to grow unabated. In 1993, it seemed difficult to have to resettle 100,000 settlers. But to resolve the current challenge of 600,000 settlers in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is a task of enormous proportions. In July and August, over 2,000 new housing units were announced by Israel. The Kingdom of the Netherlands condemns those decisions. The number of advanced housing units increased severely in the second quarter of 2018, compared to the first quarter of the year, and also compared to the same period in 2017. Settlements are illegal under international law, and that policy undermines the prospects for peace, as was also reconfirmed by the Council in resolution 2334 (2016).

The stalled peace process has led to disillusion and frustration over the past 25 years. Three-quarters of the Palestinian people believe that the situation today is worse than before the Oslo Accords. Among Israelis and Palestinians, support for the two-State solution is now below 50 per cent, yet nobody sees a better alternative. We are deeply worried by those trends and the lack of positive steps on either side that would help to reverse them.

Secondly, I turn my attention to the threats to the two-State solution. Nothing shows better why the trends must be reversed than their impact on the lives of Israelis and Palestinians. As others have said, the entire village of Khan Al-Ahmar is slated for demolition and eviction. We reiterate the call of the European Union on the Israeli Government to reconsider its plan to demolish the village, including its school, and displace its residents. Its demolition would have very serious consequences, both for the residents of that community, including its children, and for the prospects of the two-State solution.

The slated demolition does not stand on its own. For Palestinians, it is nearly impossible to obtain building permits. According to the United Nations, in 2016 over 16,000 demolition orders were pending against Palestinian buildings in Area C alone. At the same time, the Israeli settlements continue to grow.

Last weekend, an Israeli civilian was again stabbed to death. The Kingdom of the Netherlands strongly condemns such terrorist attacks. There is no excuse for terrorism.

Thirdly, I will speak on the situation in Gaza. The humanitarian situation there is getting worse by the day. We were close to a complete resumption of hostilities in the summer. We welcome the progress made towards calm, under the leadership of the United Nations and Egypt. However, the underlying issues remain unresolved, as Nickolay Mladenov again made clear today.

Unemployment has risen to over 50 per cent. Protests continue at the border, as sadly illustrated by yesterday's events, with more victims as a result. We call on all relevant parties to ensure that protests remain peaceful. We also urgently repeat our call upon Israel to ensure that its responses are proportionate and necessary at all times, in line with its obligations under international law. The high number of victims raises serious questions regarding the proportionality of the Israeli response.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands supports initiatives to improve living conditions in Gaza. Large-scale desalination projects in Gaza or connecting Gaza to natural gas can contribute substantially to improving the lives of people in Gaza. However, Gaza should not need to be a recipient of humanitarian aid. All sides must take steps to revive the economy, through, inter alia, a predictable opening of the crossings, while taking into account Israel's security needs.

The steps called for in resolution 1860 (2009) are still as relevant today as they were in 2009. In that regard, let me reiterate our support for the efforts of Mr. Mladenov. We call upon all sides to constructively engage in order to find a durable solution for many of the problems Gaza faces. In the absence of economic recovery, people are dependent on humanitarian aid.

We remain deeply concerned by the financial crisis of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). We support it in its tremendous work for the most vulnerable people in Gaza and the other areas of operation. We welcome the additional funding by new and old partners of UNRWA. We commend UNRWA for its cost-saving measures and decision to open its schools, despite the uncertain situation.

In conclusion, I started by reflecting on the 25 years that have passed since Oslo. Nobody thought peace would be easy. We take hope from the fact that many times parties have come close to an agreement. We encourage the Palestinian and Israeli leaderships not to turn their backs to each other, but to continue on the complex road towards peace. Only they can decide the final status issues, and in our view all final status issues can be resolved if the political will exists.

We believe that the well-known parameters still hold the best framework for any resolution. First, there must be an agreement on the borders of the two States, based on the 4 June 1967 lines, with equivalent land swaps as may be agreed between the parties. Secondly, security arrangements for the Palestinians must respect their sovereignty and show that the occupation is over; and for the Israelis, they must protect their security. The resurgence of terrorism must be prevented and security threats, including the new and vital threats in the region, must be addressed. Thirdly, a just, fair, agreed and realistic solution to the refugee question must be put in place. Fourthly, the aspirations of both parties for Jerusalem must be fulfilled. A way must be found through negotiations to resolve the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of both States.

Mr. Esono Mbengono (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the team led by Mr. Mladenov, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his clear and detailed briefing and, above all, for his unceasing effort to overcome the political impasse that the conflict has endured for many years.

We welcome the fact that the Security Council is meeting again today to address that conflict. Twenty-eight years after the Madrid Conference, peace is ever more distant. The path mapped out by the Madrid Conference and the Oslo Accords 25 years ago is almost in danger of becoming obsolete. We are faced with a very worrying dynamic of the exhaustion of hope in the negotiating process and of a gradual loss of confidence in the viability of the two-State solution. Furthermore, the reports that we have received from the region from the beginning of the conflict to the present day have continuously highlighted violence as a predominant and growing element.

History has demonstrated that the conflict does not have a military solution. The parties are fated to seek a solution through negotiations, which is why it is

important that they abstain from taking action that can aggravate the already complicated situation.

Over the past six months, we have witnessed violence unleashed on the border between Israel and the Gaza Strip in clashes between Palestinian marchers and Israeli forces, including rocket attacks launched by insurgents from Gaza, which have been answered by strong attacks by the Israeli army. All those hostilities have resulted in more than 100 Palestinian deaths, many injuries and great material damage. Added to that, the total blockade imposed on Gaza has aggravated the existing humanitarian crisis. It is important for Israel to understand that it must end its policy of the demolition of Palestinian homes and use proportional force. There is urgent need for sustainable solution to the situation of the nearly 2 million people in that Palestinian enclave that guarantees a dignified life and greater protection for people on both sides.

The insurgency of certain sectors that are threatening the security of Israel from Gaza is a direct consequence of the absence of the Palestinian National Authority in the area. In that regard, my delegation wishes to express its concern over the failure to comply with the reconciliation pact signed by Hamas and Fatah of 12 October 2017 in Egypt, which provided — among other things — for the return last December of the Palestinian National Authority and its total control of that enclave. In that regard, we recommend more support for the initiative of Egypt and other actors to actively and definitively promote intra-Palestinian reconciliation, which is indispensable for the reorganization and security of Gaza. We wish to acknowledge the efforts of the Egyptian Government in that regard.

Of great concern to us is the current financial situation of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Middle East (UNRWA), which must remain able to carry out its role and provide important services to the millions of Palestinians who depend on it. In that connection, we commend the recent pronouncements of the countries that have increased their support for UNRWA, and we urge the other members of the international community to join in that gesture of support for the displaced Palestinians.

Equatorial Guinea acknowledges the submission of written reports, which has been a practice of the Council. We hope that in this case, in accordance with resolution 2334 (2016) and in line with established practice, the next quarterly report will be provided in writing.

Finally, Equatorial Guinea agress with the international community that greater efforts are needed to resume meaningful negotiations aimed at achieving a two-State solution, based on the 1967 borders, which would meet Israeli and Palestinian needs for security and Palestinian aspirations to enjoy the status of a sovereign State, put an end to the occupation and resolve all final-status issues, putting an end to the conflict. Both parties have the same right to live with the guarantees of peace and security and must respect the various Security Council resolutions in that regard.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

I thank Mr. Mladenov for his briefing.

I have listened to my colleagues' statements this afternoon with great interest. I have always been open about my belief that this Middle East debate has been excessively and unfairly focused on Israel. Today, I will go one step further. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is serious and worthy of the Council's attention, but if there is one country that is the source of conflict and instability in the Middle East — one country that merits a quarterly debate in the Security Council — that country is not Israel. It is Iran.

For almost 40 years, the Iranian regime has existed outside the community of law-abiding nations. It is difficult to name a conflict in the Middle East that does not have Iran's fingerprints on it. The Iranian regime has backed dictators who gas their own people. It stokes conflict. It funds foreign fighters and terrorists. It transfers missiles to militants. It acts against the interests and policies of the Security Council time and time again. Across the Middle East, Iran has trampled on the sovereignty of its neighbours in Lebanon, in Syria and in Yemen, and the Iranian regime has shown a total disregard of the sovereignty of a country that is at a critical stage in its political development — Iraq.

Iran's leaders pretend that their interference in the sovereignty of other nations is done in the name of religious affiliation. They like to claim that they have been invited into the affairs of other countries. In fact, the motives of the mullahs are much less elevated. They are interested in power. In the case of Iraq, their goal is to exploit uncertainty in order to create an Iranian-

controlled corridor for weapons and fighters from Tehran to the Mediterranean.

In recent months, Iran's aggression has escalated. Iranian proxies in Iraq operate openly, with funding, training, and weapons supplied by Tehran. The Iranian regime has reportedly begun over the past few months to transfer ballistic missiles to those proxies in Iraq. It is reportedly developing the capability for its proxy militias to produce their own missiles inside of Iraq.

In a blatant violation of Iraqi sovereignty, the Iranian regime recently fired a barrage of missiles from Iran into Iraq. Iran attacked the headquarters of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran, killing 11 people. This was an act not of Iranian proxies but of the Tehran regime itself. It was Iran's first direct military strike into Iraqi territory in over a decade. That Iranian interference in the sovereignty of Iraq should be of great interest to the Security Council for many reasons, not least of which is because it occurs in clear defiance of Security Council resolutions.

Iranian General and Head of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Quds Force Qasem Soleimani is leading an effort to influence the composition of a new Iraqi Government. I remind my colleagues that Soleimani was banned from travelling outside of Iran by the Security Council in 2007. That ban was reaffirmed in 2015 with the adoption of resolution 2231 (2015). Despite that unambiguous travel ban, Soleimani has practically taken up residence in Iraq since the May elections. That fact was noted by the Secretary-General in his most recent report on the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015) (S/2018/602). And let us be clear about what Soleimani is up to in Iraq. He is not there to help create a Government in Baghdad that is responsive to the Iraqi people. He is there to build an Iraqi Government that is under the control of the Iranian regime.

Iran treats Iraq as if it were not an independent nation. Iran sees Iraq as merely a transit point for Iranian weapons and a training ground for Iranian proxies. Iran seeks to keep Iraq economically weak and dependent on its exports, even though Iraq has plenty of its own resources. Why? Because Iran wants to use a weak Iraq to illicitly fund its terrorist activities.

There is one more recent Iranian escalation that bears special consequence to Americans. Two weeks ago, two Iranian proxy groups launched rocket attacks on the American Embassy in Baghdad and the United States Consulate in Basra. Using proxy forces in Iraq does not give the Iranian regime plausible deniability when attacks like this occur. The Trump Administration does not and will not buy that. Iran could have stopped its proxies' attacks. It chose not to, so the White House responded by putting Tehran firmly on notice: We hold the Iranian regime fully accountable for its proxies' attacks on United States facilities and personnel in Iraq, and we will not hesitate to vigorously defend American lives.

The sovereignty of Member States is an issue that comes up a lot in the Security Council — for good reason. Every nation has the sovereign right to govern itself, protect its people and defend its borders. No less than any nation, Iraq has that right. And yet, at a critical time in its history, as Iraqis build their Government, Iran is acting in shameless disregard of Iraqi sovereignty. It is threatening populations to promote its own political leaders. It is undermining a key feature of sovereignty — a State monopoly on the use of force — by promoting its own militias.

The United States is committed to working with Iraq to help it create an inclusive and independent Government. Iraq is working to recover from years of conflict against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham, and still to overcome the legacy of Saddam Hussein's tyranny. Not only is Iranian interference preventing forward progress for the Iraqi people; it is pulling them backward to the conflict and division they are striving to put behind them. That is the very same conflict and division that Iran promotes in Syria, Yemen and Lebanon and across the Middle East. All members of the Security Council that respect the principle of national sovereignty should be concerned, and all that respect the right to self-determination of the Iraqi people should come to their defence.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.